

EXHIBIT 2

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Abandoned homes cleared of trash in Needham's 'forgotten' community

By Stefan Geller

Posted May 8, 2018 at 3:15 PM

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The trash piled up along five abandoned homes on Riverside Street in Needham was cleared last week, relieving community members of the headaches and indignation it had continually caused.

"It's wonderful. Everyone has a smile on their face now when they go by," Nina Prohodski told the Needham Times last week. Prohodski lives on and rents out several properties on Riverside Street.

Prohodski had been complaining to town officials about the homes and the trash on them for years, as the garbage would regularly blow across the street onto her properties, as well as draw wild animals like raccoons and skunks into the small neighborhood.

"For over 20 years I've been cleaning up this neighborhood because of other people's neglect. I'm 85 years old and I cannot do it any longer," Prohodski told the Needham Times last month.

Owners' attorney: 'He loves the town'

Over the course of several days, landscapers from Summerfield Landscaping and Construction Inc. rid the properties of the trash bags, beer bottles and cat food cans that had collected in large piles, and cleared away dead brush and fallen leaves from all the yards.

The owner of the properties, John Savanovich, could not be reached for comment, but his attorney, Nick Louisa of Russell and Associates, said that the cleaning of the homes has been an ongoing process and that recent attention from town residents did not influence it.

"This has been in the works for the entire time that we've represented him," Louisa said. "John has lived his entire life in Needham. He grew up on those properties, he loves the town and has a lot of respect for his neighbors."

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Town trying to address properties

According to Timothy McDonald, director of the Needham Public Health Department, the town has been working for several years to try to get Savanovich to sell the properties, but have repeatedly run into obstacles.

"I feel for the people in that neighborhood, because it's very frustrating. Especially because they have to put up with very unsightly homes," McDonald said. "The guy just doesn't want to sell."

McDonald said that they have been working with Attorney General Maura Healey's office to address the problem, which did help them flip another of Savanovich's abandoned properties on Highland Terrace last year, but there is still work to be done.

According to Louisa, Savanovich has not made a decision as to what will ultimately happen to the properties, but said that they are doing what they can to help the neighborhood.

"We've represented [Savanovich] since 2015 and the results that came out of 26 Highland Terrace can be used to assure the residents that their concerns are being addressed," Louisa said.

Prohodski said that she still feels the town needs to fix the curbs and the streets in her neighborhood, but overall she's happy with the progress that was made with the abandoned homes.

"Everyone's elated. My tenants, the people out back, they're so grateful," she said. "It looks like a normal neighborhood."